

REMARKS

The Examiner has requested restriction to one of the below listed groups under 35 U.S.C. §121.

Group I – claims 1-19, drawn to a textile treatment agent composition.

Group II - Claim 20, drawn to a method for treating textiles with an inorganic compound.

Further, the Examiner contends that the application contains claims directed to more than one species of the generic invention:

- (a) an inorganic surface modifying agent (claims 7-10); and
- (b) an organic surface modify agent (claims 11-12).

The Examiner states that these species are deemed to lack unity of invention because they are not so linked as to form a single generic inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1.

In this regard, the Examiner further states that these species would lack the same or corresponding special technical features since an organic surface modification would have a different chemical behavior and properties than an inorganic surface modification. While the Examiner's point is well taken, Applicants respectfully disagree as this is too much of a generalization since organic residues may also be designed so as to exhibit the same or at least similar properties as inorganic residues, e.g., betains as in currently pending claim 12, for example, are hydrophilic as are the inorganic surface modifications of the present invention. The same reasoning may also apply to silanes as mentioned in currently pending claim 12 since their structure is not defined any further.

Applicants respectfully submit that the inventions of Groups I and Group II should remain in the present application. Groups I and II are sufficiently related as to not create an undue burden for the Examiner.

In the event that the Examiner maintains the requested restriction, Applicants hereby provisionally elect to prosecute the claims of **Group I, species (a), claims 1-10 and 13-19**, with traverse, for purposes of examination. Further, Applicant reserves the right to prosecute the subject matter of Group II (claims 11, 12 and 20) by way of divisional and/or continuing application(s) without prejudice.

Respectfully submitted,

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